

# Kyodan

## News Letter

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### "EVEN IF GOD DOESN'T INTERVENE"

A book that reads like the Acts of the Apostles but deals with events as recent as Japan-Korea relations in the 1930s and 1940s is arousing much attention among Japan's reading public.

The author, Yi Sook An, describes her Pauline adventures during the Japanese occupation of Korea and the faith that enabled her to respond with boldness to encounters with the Japanese police.

The book was first published in Korean and sold thousands of copies. A year and a half ago, Mrs. Yi Sook An Kim arrived in Tokyo from the United States bearing a manuscript of the book in Japanese. Sensing the spiritual force of the story, a Christian publisher, Taishinsha, agreed to publish it, in spite of the editing difficulties and risks involved. The book was published in April of this year in Japanese, under the title, Tatoi so de nakutemo (Even if God doesn't intervene; Daniel 3:18). The book is now in its 7th printing and has sold 24,000 copies.

The first chapter opens with Yi Sook An as a young music teacher in a Christian mission school in Son Chon, Korea. She has been instructed by the principal of her school to attend the worship at the shrine on the hill. At that time she decides, "Even if I die because God does not save me from the hands of the Japanese, I will never bow in reverence to the gods of the Japanese. How could I who have been saved by Christ, throw myself before any god who is not God the Father of Jesus Christ?" And so, in front of the high officials and uniformed police assembled there, she refuses to worship at the shrine.



This begins a series of persecutions and wanderings that bring Miss An to Tokyo, where she calls on various church leaders to ask them about the problem of shrine worship and faith. One day she goes directly to the Diet when it is in session to read a message warning the government leaders of the consequence of their acts. There she is arrested, kept in jail for two months and eventually sent to the Pyong Yang jail in Korea.

When she is asked by a detective of the Tokyo Metropolitan police, "Why did you come to Tokyo?" she replies, "Japan is now committing every kind of treason against the Lord, Creator of the universe. The time cannot help but come when God will punish Japan. Japan will be burnt by sulphurous fire and perish. I must warn the leaders of the state of this...."

The conditions in the Pyong Yang prison are wretched--filthy, infested with insects. She writes of being so hungry that she cried and tried to eat an ox hide belt. The fact that she has undergone training for fasting and has memorized 100 chapters from the Bible and 150 hymns in preparation for imprisonment helps sustain her.

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In prison Miss An continues to testify to the God who is living and working and to the love of Christ that overcomes fear and hunger. During her imprisonment, a prisoner in her cell repents, a jailer is converted, a prostitute comes to believe in God and becomes a preacher. The warden of the prison, seeing one miracle after another, says, "I declare, the God in whom you believe has saved you today."

Miss An is awaiting execution after six years in jail when the war ends and she is freed. Yet there is still to come a life-and-death encounter with the Russian Army and Korean communists when they cross the 38th parallel.

The book ends as Miss An embarks for America to witness to her faith there. She is now the wife of Rev. Dong Myoung Kim, pastor of the Korean Church in Los Angeles.

#### MAJOR DECISIONS OF 25th EXECUTIVE:

Election of an Acting Moderator and an Assistant to the Acting Moderator, selection of an Acting General Secretary, and approval of a plan to appoint a special committee to prepare for the 17th General Assembly of the Kyodan were actions taken by the Kyodan's Executive Committee when it met for the 25th time since the 1968 General Assembly, on Oct. 23-25.

Rev. KIKAKU SHIMAMURA, pastor of Tokyo's famous Fujimicho Church, was elected Acting Moderator to provide leadership in the absence of Moderator MITSUHO YOSHIDA. Yoshida's resignation has been acknowledged but his term will not be completed until his successor is elected by the next General Assembly. Elected as Assistant to the Acting Moderator was Rev. KICHIYA KIKUCHI of Tokyo's Shitaya Church.

The nomination of Rev. GEORGE HANABUSA to the position of Acting General Secretary was approved. He succeeds Rev. TORU TAKAKURA, whose four-year term ended Oct. 31. Takakura will become head of the Kyodan's Tsurukawa Rural Institute. Hanabusa, executive secretary of the Committee for Ecumenical Ministries, will continue in that position as well as in the General Secretariat until the 17th General Assembly.

The Executive Committee voted to establish a General Assembly Preparation Committee and to give it a mandate to plan and prepare for the 17th General Assembly, subject to the approval of the Executive

Committee. The Preparation Committee will be composed of representatives of the Kyodan, several laymen nominated by the Executive Committee, and others invited to attend as consultants.

#### CURRENT HISTORY

On Tuesday evening, Oct. 31, 80 persons gathered at a farewell party for Yoichi Harada. In the smorgasbord of speeches that accompanied the smorgasbord of Japanese and Western foods characteristic of a sobetsukai (farewell), three histories unfolded:

##### Yoichi Harada

Harada, 41, has, in the past twelve years, grown from a seminary student with a flair for journalism into a seasoned editor, regarded by his colleagues as an expert technician, a writer able to communicate with the reader in the pew, a person sensitive to each Christian and each church's attempt to engage in mission in its particular setting. In the 145 issues that have come out under Harada's editorship, the Shinto no Tomo has never missed its publication date--a tribute to Harada's self-discipline and dedication.

##### Shinto no Tomo

The Shinto no Tomo made its debut as a magazine for the Kyodan laity under Harada's editorship in April, 1964, and now has a readership of 40,000. It is noted for its high quality four-color covers--often of original Japanese art--its warm rotogravure photographic features, its varied content ranging from delicate haiku to heated debates over Kyodan issues and series on individuals,



local churches, contemporary themes. (Harada has also been editor of Shinto no Tomo's elder sister, Kokoro no Tomo, the Kyodan's evangelism newspaper, whose circulation is now 175,000, having trebled in the past seven years.)

Kami hoshi kawa Church Beginning as a house meeting of four persons in September, 1963, this core invited Harada to be its part-time pastor in December of that year. It is now a church of more than 100 members with its own church building and the desire for a full-time pastor.

On Nov. 1, Harada left the nationwide parish of Shinto no Tomo and Kokoro no Tomo to focus his ministry on the life and mission of Kamihoshikawa Church in Yokohama, taking with him the experiences from visiting scores of Kyodan congregations and the wisdom of the hundreds of church leaders, writers, social critics whose thoughts and words have appeared in Shinto no Tomo.

*Many Japanese-reading friends abroad also enjoy reading Shinto no Tomo.*

#### YOKOHAMA CHURCHES bring VETERAN MISSIONARIES back for 25TH ANNIVERSARY

In an unusual gesture of love and esteem, three Yokohama churches recently brought back to Japan veteran missionaries Rev. and Mrs. Ernst Lang to help celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Shimizugaoka Church. The Langs, who retired in the United States in 1967, were instrumental in the founding of these three churches in Yokohama--Kikuna (1932), Shimizugaoka (1947) and Okamura (1950).

The Langs' arrival on Oct. 11 was the result of two years of planning. The three churches had set a goal of ¥1 million (\$3,333) to cover roundtrip air travel, hotel and incidental expenses in Japan, and each member had agreed to raise at least ¥5,000. The Langs did not accept the first invitation, however, saying they felt the churches should use the funds for their own needs. Nevertheless, during the past summer, a second invitation was issued, and with it was sent a tape which contained the appeals of many people, asking the Langs to return and saying they were praying for their visit. These voices moved the Langs to accept.

On Oct. 15 the three churches held a gala welcome. The Langs' calendar was full--preaching on Sundays, speaking to youth, adult and women's gatherings, visiting the churches' kindergartens.

On the 19th, the Langs participated in the 25th anniversary service at Shimizugaoka Church. At the time of the founding of the church, Rev. Yoshio Kuramochi had just graduated from seminary. Today the church has a membership of 300 persons. In 1950 it founded the Okamura congregation as a branch church.

Lang described the 25th anniversary service as "one of the most memorable moments in my life." "Our hearts are truly full of joy for this marvellous and unusual expression of love for us," he said.

One member had wanted to put his Cadillac at their disposal but Lang begged off, saying that even though he had driven a Jeep and a Ford around Yokohama and over most of the Izu Peninsula in earlier years, the traffic had increased so drastically in the past five years that he didn't have the confidence to drive now. This member and others then provided cars and drivers for the Langs' use during their stay.

The Langs came to Japan under the German Liebenzeller Mission in 1928 but were forced to become self-supporting during the difficult days of World War II. After the Pacific War, they became associated with the Evangelical United Brethren Church in North America. The Langs' six children were all born in Japan and two of the boys are ministers. They also have seven grandchildren.

The visit was a demonstration of the high regard in which the Langs are held and a tribute to their ministry, which included church extension, medical missions, prison evangelism and youth work.



what has been - - I N T H E K Y O D A N - - what is to be

I. Coming Events

Orientation for new Kyodan-related missionaries Nov. 24-25

Nov. 26 is "Appreciation Day" for retired pastors, widows (Shimpo 11/18)

II. Recent Events

Communication

Kuniyasu resigns as Shimpo editor (Shimpo 11/18)

Kyo Bun Kwan publishes first in 18-volume series on contemporary Japanese Christian literature (Shimpo 11/4)

Districts

Kyushu District issues fundamental mission policy and plan (Shimpo 11/11)

Higashi Chugoku mission section studies basic policy (Shimpo 11/18)

Education

NCC Educ. Div. raises funds for x-ray equipment for Dr. Ito in Nepal during Christian Education Week (Shimbun 10/21)

Okinawa Christian College fund reaches ¥3,412,829 (\$11,400) as of 11/13

Kyodan Educ. Comm. appeals for Christmas church school offerings for Children of traffic victims (Shimpo 11/11)

Kyodan

25th Exec. Comm. Oct. 23-24, approves constituting General Assembly

Prep. Comm. of persons named by districts (Shimpo 11/4, Shimbun 11/4)

25th Exec. Comm. elects Shimamura Acting Moderator, Kikuchi, Assistant; names George Hanabusa Acting General Secretary (Shimpo 11/11, KNL 11/72)

Ministry

25th Exec. Comm. approves ordination of 52 pastors, licensing of 9 persons (Shimpo 11/11)

Overseas

Council of Cooperation votes to accept new cooperative relationship with No. America churches, sending delegates to JNAC Const. Assembly

Social

Social Comm. appeals for ¥2,500,000 (8,333) for Christmas gifts to retired pastors and widows and those ill a longtime (Shimpo 11/18)

Rev. Ochimi Kubushiro, 89, women's rights pioneer, dies (Shimpo 11/4)

Widow of Self-Defense Forces member killed in auto accident four years ago protests move to honor him at shrine.

The following changes in staff responsibilities were made as of November 1:

George Hanabusa	Acting General Secretary; Executive Secretary, Committee for Ecumenical Ministries; Missionary Personnel Secretary
Kazuyo Kishimoto	Director, Joint Broadcasting Committee, Executive Secretary, Information Committee
Hajime Kashiwai	Executive Secretary, Research Institute on Mission, Commission on Mission, Committee on Faith and Order
Kiyoshi Takai	Executive Secretary, General Affairs, Commission on the Ministry
Keizo Kawana	Treasurer